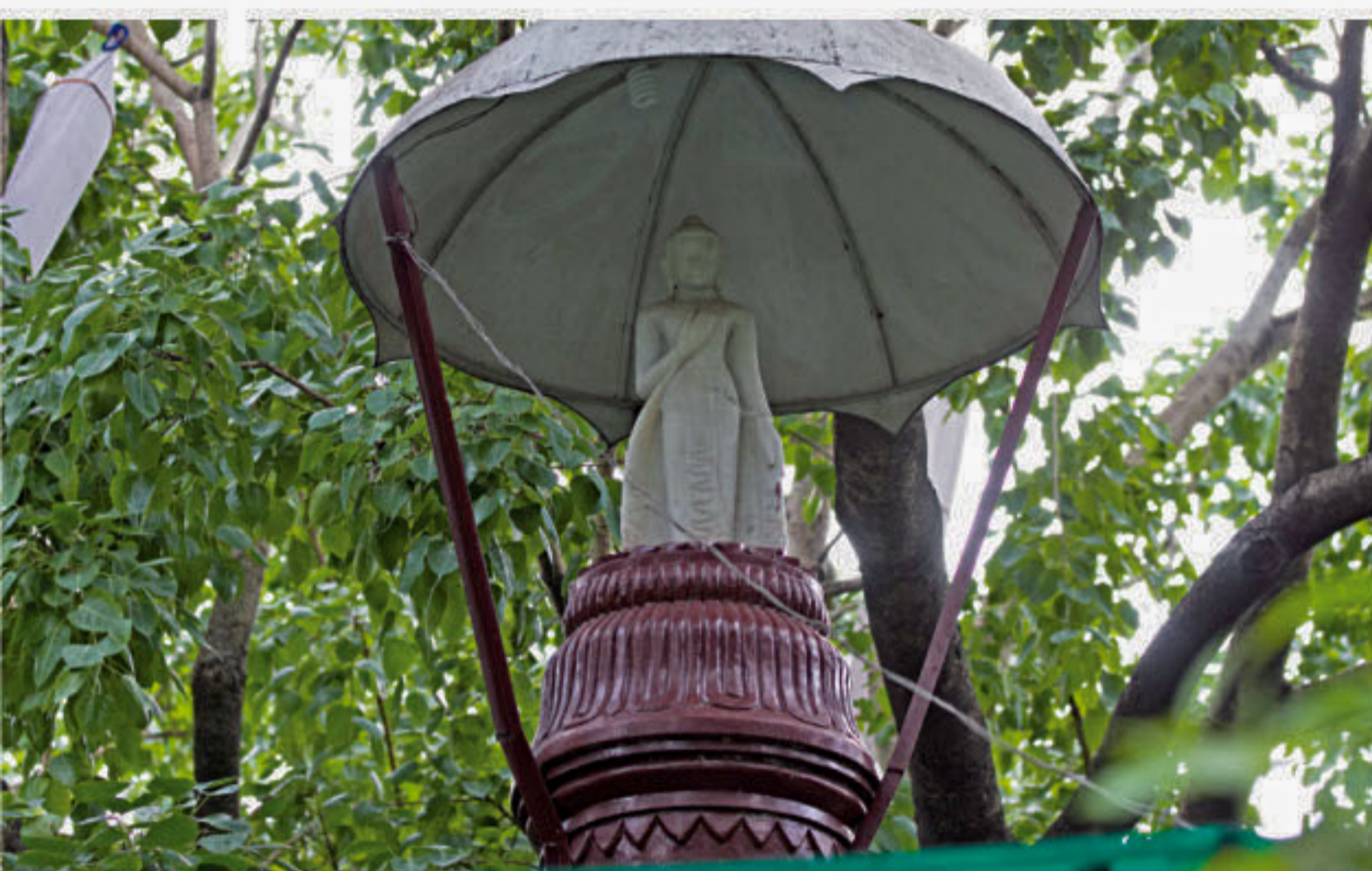


SPECIAL FEATURE

The Buddhas only point the way

That historic meeting, which came to be known as the First Buddhist Council, echoes throughout history till this date, as the teachings, traditions and sayings of Buddha were determined, memorised and chanted by Buddhists for generations, before it was written down centuries later -- Tripitaka, literally meaning 'three baskets', consists of three major sections.



It was not to be any ordinary meeting. Now that the Buddha was gone, it became a growing worry that his teachings would become lost, misstated or corrupted. Mahakasyapa -- one of the most distinguished disciples of Buddha -- had therefore summoned a large group of enlightened and extraordinary Buddhist followers and monks, in order to narrate, cross-check and determine the teachings of the great man.

The list of disciples included many great minds, like Ananda -- the Guardian of the Dharma -- who attended to the Buddha personally and often travelled with him. He had the most retentive memory.

That historic meeting, which came to be known as the First Buddhist Council, echoes throughout history till this date, as the teachings, traditions and sayings of Buddha were determined, memorised and chanted by Buddhists for generations, before it was written down centuries later -- Tripitaka, literally meaning 'three baskets', consists of three major sections.

What Buddha said numerous centuries ago is still as relevant today as it was during his time. With depression being a growing problem in this intolerant society of endless desires and our lives chaotic and stressful, we could use some wise words of Buddha.

Everybody goes through suffering

Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, sickness is suffering, death is suffering, sorrow and lamentation, pain, grief and despair are suffering...

Buddha had talked a great deal about suffering. In fact, this is the First Noble Truth -- of the Four Noble Truths -- which is said to be one of the primary teachings of Buddha. This does not mean that Buddha pessimistically believed that we are all doomed and destined to be unhappy no matter what we do! He was simply addressing the reality that all of us have sufferings in our lives. Life is not a bed of roses. Everybody has problems, tragedies and misfortunes. That's just how it is. The sooner you realise this truth, the sooner you will be able to relax and work towards making things right instead of complaining, fretting or sinking into hopelessness.

Learn how to be peaceful

Resolutely train yourself to attain peace

Being happy and content is a matter of choice. And being peaceful usually does not come naturally or easily. It actually takes effort. We all crave for that much talked about Nirvana. So how do you go about attaining peace in your life? Well, for starters, cultivating positive thoughts and practicing meditating will take you a long way.

SEE PAGE 17

